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\$1200.00 PRIZE STORIES \$1200.00

The following conditions govern the submission of each prize of \$1200 monthly for "Comforts" stories, and the manuscript of each writer only as here compiled with all these requirements will receive consideration.

All the necessary particulars here clearly set out will be suitable for any one to seek further information or personal letters by addressing the editor at least ten days before the closing date.

1. Only persons who are regular paid up subscribers to "Comforts" and who send with their subscription a check for at least ten days before the closing date.

2. All contributions must have the number of words they contain plainly noted thereon in addition to the writer's full name and address as shown in the list of writers in previous issues on the left of the page only.

3. All stories must be original and not have been published in any form, in any newspaper, magazine, or elsewhere, and must be of such a nature as to be of interest to the general public.

4. All stories must be returned enclosed in a plain wrapper and must be accompanied by a check for at least ten days before the closing date.

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unearthly life, at least once in a period of years, they have had what they chose to call "a narrow escape."

Being a traveler, and for the greater part of my life a wanderer in far countries, and thus willingly or unwillingly courting dangers, I have had quite my share of "close calls," by fire and flood, by poison and famine, in battle or the hunt, on land and on sea. But it now remains for me to describe the most novel of all my experiences. It was a day's entombment under three hundred million tons of ice, in an Alpine crevasse. It was an event which I recall with the most vivid and enduring terrors.

There were four of us in training to do the gigantic peaks about Chamonix. We had done Mount Blanc several times, making the trip in a single day, which is a rare feat of physical endurance, and had gone up thence to Montanvert, which stands, surrounded by cathedral-like peaks, about eight thousand feet above sea level. There was a hospice on the summit, where we proposed to take shelter until such a time as the weather was most favorable for the record-breaking, for we had the honors of the Alpine club (a large and influential body of scientific Swiss mountaineers) in view.

Although it was only August, we had no more than reached the hospice of Montanvert than we were caught in a gigantic snow storm and were obliged to remain there for five days. Time passes very quickly among such magnificence of nature, even though one be housed in above the clouds; but the delay was regrettable on account of the physical reprieve which an athlete suffers in not being able to keep his muscles in perfect training. When there came a cessation, however small, in the raging storm, we would leap up the mountain side and bowl great rocks down the steep declivities upon the *Mer de Glace* below us—a sea of ice, some ten miles long, seeming almost to stand on end. Then, worn out with the sport, we would return and at the next favorable moment, spurt down the declivity upon the great glacier itself, leap the crevasses and speed halfway across and back again before the blinding snow and clouds could impede and make dangerous our retreat. In this way, we managed to keep ourselves in reasonable condition.

Living in daily contact with perils and dangers, one begins to regard death as something for people who live among safer surroundings. There seems to be a special providence which walks beside and guards around the man who is in daily danger of his life.

It was not much later than daybreak of that August day, when I arose to inspect the barometer and the weather prospects for our record-breaking trip, when I went out for a stroll. The glacier below

us resembled a vast down-rushing sea of water at maddening speed, with seething white waves, mountain high, and, suddenly, by some awful force of nature, changed to ice—a magic and supernatural transformation. But, once upon these wave crests of blue-white ice, here and there were to be seen the awful depths between, limitless abysses, blue, grim and bottomless into which a man might as safely slip as into the crater of Vesuvius for all his chances of rescue. At first sight, these crevasses inspire one with a strange awe—a sense of man's littleness and desolation; but after leaping across these features for many days in succession, the abhorrent grin in the ice-clefts, lose their fascination and dread, and therein is the danger.

The sun had risen gloriously between the peaks far above the head of the ice-gorge, and the pagent was magnificent beyond words. The clouds were circling round the sea, some sailing far down the valley of the Arve below, some ascending, by swift upper currents, and dashing like white monsters against the flanks of the naked cliffs that towered about me. Momentarily the thunder of the cracking gorges sounded through the vast space between the imposing pinnacles, and with a roar the parting mountains of ice rumbled down the limitless space within.

I had spurted half way out upon the wave-crests of this frozen lake when I felt beneath me one of those awful convulsions of Nature which I had heard hourly at a vast distance but had never been very near. I had braced myself on all fours while crawling around a most perilous spot at the edge of an ice cavern, when the very mountains seemed to rock as with a mighty earthquake, and, amid the most deafening thunders, the very ice-boulder upon which I clung for safety, split, and I was plunged headlong down, obliquely, on a smooth glossy incline, four hundred feet to the wedge-shaped bottom of the fissure! I have no accurate way of knowing the distance of this awful and unbroken fall; for, from the moment of my lost foothold to the instant I reached the bottom of the crevasse, I completely lost consciousness. To drop that distance vertically would mean certain death; but to slide down a steep incline, encountering many deviations on the way, as I must have done, for my clothes were shredded and my limbs bruised and bleeding, is possible once in a thousand times without fatal results.

I lay for some moments on my back in the bottom of this far away narrow tomb, staring up at that far away rock of heaven above me. It was like a thread of gold—a streak of red lightning through the blue night enveloping me.

I aroused myself sufficiently to realize that I was in a far from pleasant and compromising destiny. I braced myself

upon my hands and knees, as yet too numbly by the stunning blow of the fall to feel the intense cold or the sting of the hundred fresh wounds. Then slowly I awoke to the truth. Death was at my side here, and all about me! It was only a question of moments. To make outcry or struggle was absolutely vain; and I must confess that this first conviction filled me with unpeppable fear and not a small degree of cowardice; but when the leaping heart regained its self-poise again, a peaceful and fortifying courage came over me. I was ready.

Now comes a strange experience, scarcely credible, and certainly unexplainable. There were moments of complete oblivion, followed by those of the intense mental activity. In these last, as they recurred, I saw the past with the panoramic sweep of a supernatural being. I resolved to make what memoranda I could; and, perhaps, at the expiration of some lengthy period, the tidings of my fate would reach the civilized world. I knew the glacier had a slow downward motion toward the valley, some five hundred feet in a year, according to scientific measurement, and calculated that at most, in twelve or fourteen years my body with the message to my loved ones would be found, when the ice mountains about me would be melted away by the valley sun, and give up their prisoner. With great difficulty, I got at my note book and by breathing on my fingers as I went along, managed to make this record:

I write these lines in the bottom of a crevasse, at least four hundred feet from the surface. I was crossing the *Mer de Glace* alone a little after daybreak on this August 21, 1894, when, by some sudden cataclysm, the ice parted like an earthquake rent, and I slid down to the bottom of the fissure, where I now write without one hope of rescue. I have already been in here over an hour. I know that for my watch has stopped either with the jer or with the intense cold, nearly an hour after the time of my settling out. I see certain death before me, but am resigned; and if any of my family lives and this record reaches the world, tell them I die bravely, with firm faith in God and a hero's conscience. This book contains my address and those of my wife and father. Farewell, dear ones, forever!

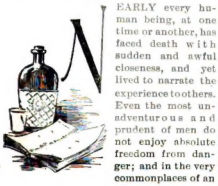
I must confess that as I penned these awful words, I never expected to read them again under the light of heaven, nor indeed, scarcely had the hope in my poor heart that anyone else would either. I drove the record into my locket pocket and then stared blankly at the solid blue walls about me, awaiting the end. It was freezing to death.

Again and again periods of complete

ONCE IS ENOUGH.

WRITTEN FOR COMFORT BY CHAS. EDWARDS.

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